

Talk Notes

Title: Knowing God

Meeting: Freshwaters

Date: 03/09/2017

Introduction

I have been reading the book of Hosea over recent weeks and in **Hosea 6** there are a couple of fantastic verses that I want to speak from this morning.

Firstly to provide a context, Hosea was called to prophesy towards the end of Jeroboam II's reign in Israel. This king had a long reign marked with great prosperity, stability and peace – but also great wickedness. Hosea was called to warn Israel of impending judgement which came at the end of Jeroboam's reign.

Hosea, perhaps more than any other prophet, reveals to us the heart of God towards those who have rejected and abandoned Him. God uses Hosea's own experience as a husband married to an unfaithful wife to illustrate His relationship with wayward Israel.

What comes across is not God's desire to punish, but his desire to restore a broken relationship. When we abandon and reject God and go our own way, it is not the breaking of law that God mourns – it is the breaking of relationship – and, in so far as this may be possible, a breaking of God's heart.

Hosea's cry (v3) - Know the Lord, press on to know Him

In this context **chapter 6** is a call for God's people to repent and return to Him – and within **chapter 6** there are two beautiful verses, the first in **verse 3** a cry from the heart of a prophet who knows the pain of rejection and the second a cry from the heart of God, Himself rejected and abandoned.

In **verse 3** Hosea cries out **“Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him. He will respond to us as surely as the arrival of dawn or the coming of rains in early spring”**

The word used for 'know' is the Hebrew word Yada' – it has a meaning partly to do with knowledge – I know these facts about God, but also much more. It also has to do with perception and recognition and also to do with relationship – it is the same word used when Adam knew Eve and the result was Cain!

So here we have a cry from the heart of Hosea, **Oh that we might have a knowledge of the Lord born out of deep intimate relationship, and that we might press on to have such**

knowledge. The word 'press' is the Hebrew word 'Radaph' and means to pursue ardently, to chase, to follow after, to aim eagerly to secure.

How well do you know the Lord? Is your knowledge primarily intellectual but not relational, or alternatively relational but with little understanding? If either of these is true we need to ask the Lord to help us to know Him better – in relationship and understanding.

What are the things that we can do to help us to know the Lord?

- Prayer – not religious but heartfelt, not one-sided but listening as well as speaking
- Faith
- Bible – overall and specifically studying Jesus
- Trust
- Fellowship with other Christians

Are we pressing in to know the Lord, or do we think we have 'arrived' or perhaps got to a level that we are comfortable with. Ask the Lord to stir a new passion, a new desire to press in to a deeper knowledge of the lord.

How can we 'press in to know the Lord'

- Not give up
- Going deeper (don't plateau)
- Overcome obstacles
- Inspired by the stories of others.

The Lord's Cry (v6)

So we have looked at the cry of the prophet Hosea, now let's take a look at **verse 6**, here with have the cry of God – **'I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings'**

This sentiment is repeated in both old and new testaments and continues to be an issue to this day. It is so easy to slip into religion, putting ritual's and rules in the place of genuine relationship based on love for God and love for one another.

Many of the prophets in the Old Testament warned the leaders and the people, who may have offered the required sacrifices in the temple; who may have religiously observed minute regulations; but whose hearts were far from God.

Jesus provided the same warning to the scribes and Pharisees of His day.

The warning continue to us – let's look at **1 Cor 13:1-3**. We may have great knowledge, great faith, we may live an exemplary life – but if it is without love than we have gained nothing.

Real knowledge of the Lord is based on love, because God is love. Love for God will inevitably lead us to love for one another **1 John 4** puts it well as we read **verses 7-20**.

Notice that in **Hosea 6** the NLT translation says 'show love', in the NIV it translates as mercy, the main emphasis is upon love in action – not just a feeling but something that compels us to action.

In what ways can we 'show love' to God?

- Spending time with Him
- Worshipping Him
- Serving Him
- Giving our lives for Him

In what ways can we 'show love' for others

- Giving one another time
- Giving gifts, offering help (practical and emotional)
- Praying for others
- Introducing others to Jesus
- Welcoming/Accepting without judgement
- Challenging

Conclusion

What have you heard this morning – perhaps the cry of Hosea, **“Oh, that we might know the Lord! Let us press on to know him.** – do you want to know God more, do you want your passion for Him to grow. Now is the time to ask Him.

Perhaps it is the cry of God that sticks out for you – **‘I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings’.** Have you slipped into a religious way of living which lacks genuine love – do you want to be able to show love more to God and to others? Ask for the Lord to refresh in you your 'First Love' – Loving from a place of knowing you are loved.

If you are feeling dry, lifeless, discouraged, and distracted – let's call on the Holy Spirit to refresh and renew us.